



Tapu'itea

...ina ia manino le folauga.

Tuesday
June 26,
2007

OFFICIAL AMERICAN SAMOA GOVERNMENT WEEKLY NEWSLETTER Vol. II, No. 6

Governor Togiola Tulafono welcomes Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne



(UTULEI) - Governor Togiola Tulafono met with Secretary of the Interior – Dirk Kempthorne, Wednesday morning, June 13th, at Government House on Maugaoali'i to discuss a variety of concerns and needs of the Territory.

Joined by Lieutenant Governor Ipulasi Aitofele Sunia, Chief Justice Michael Kruse, Senate President Lolo Moliga and House Speaker Savali Talavou Ale, Governor Togiola welcomed the Honorable Secretary to American Samoa and shared the Territory's unique history and political bond with the U.S. and its 107-year relationship.

In the one-hour meeting this morning, Governor Togiola noted the extraordinary progress that has been made since World War II and the many strides in modern economic, education, health care and infrastructure systems in American Samoa while aligning self-governance under the general guidance of Department of the Interior.

Governor Togiola highlighted several economic disparities, most notably American Samoa's low per capita personal income.

"Between 1979 and 1999, per capita income in American Samoa (not adjusted for inflation) increased an average of 4.3 percent per year. With inflation rates averaging about 3 percent per year during the period, money income in the Territory, has increased only 1.3 percent annually over the 20-year period," said Governor Togiola. "Furthermore, family poverty rates in American Samoa were 58.2 percent compared with a U.S. rate of 9.3 percent in 2000."

Governor Togiola told Secretary Kempthorne that in many respects, the income inequality reflects fundamental differences in the economies of major industrialized countries and smaller insular areas.

"It is true that the personal income estimates are not strictly comparable, but these comparability problems could not account for this disparity with the rest of the U.S.," said Governor Togiola.

Other economic challenges provided by Governor Togiola at the meeting included the structure of American Samoa's economy, where 92 percent of the Territory's entire economy is based directly, or indirectly, on canned fish exports and federal expenditures.

"This basic inflow of funds is what the remainder of American Samoa's economy depends on. This territory is not only in a state of long term low economic growth, high unemployment and excessively low per capita income, it is now threatened with sudden and severe economic dislocation," said Governor Togiola. "Our largest industry, tuna canning, could face greatly reduced operations or closures in the near future."

Governor Togiola told Secretary Kempthorne that the canneries represent about 90 percent of American Samoa's private sector and about one-third of the total jobs in the Territory. He said the threat to the tuna industry is in the impending loss of federal territorial corporate tax credits, more competitive locations in other parts of the world, and other forces adversely affecting the industry in American Samoa.

In regards to the recent federal minimum wage increase in American Samoa and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, which would be increased each year until it reaches the U.S. average, Governor Togiola said the hike would double wages in the canneries in approximately seven years, representing an average increase in wages of about 10 percent per year. *(Continued on page 2)*

Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne *(continued from page 1)*

Governor Togiola reported on some trends in American Samoa, as well as across the globe, which require a more robust and intensive Federal-Territorial partnership, especially in economic development.

“Most of the economic development issues we face have to do with falling barriers to international trade and foreign investment. This trend in international economic relations has become even more pronounced with the advent of the World Trade Organization,” said Governor Togiola. “The U.S. sees an exodus of traditional high paying manufacturing jobs to lower wage developing nations. The U.S. must make up for this by playing to its strengths especially in industries relying on rapidly advancing technology.”

Governor Togiola said to some extent American Samoa must do the same even though the average wage structure is well below that of the U.S. He said it is substantially higher than developing nations, which are benefiting from the loss of U.S. manufacturing jobs.

“Because of this wage-cost differential between American Samoa and developing nations, the Territory has had to rely on selected incentives to remain competitive, namely the duty free arrangements we enjoyed with the U.S. and U.S. corporate tax incentives,” said Governor Togiola. “As we are now all aware, these incentives are disappearing while American Samoa’s competitive position worsens.”

Governor Togiola said the U.S. Congress, having had to face difficult choices recently on both the U.S. corporate income tax credit for American Samoa and raising the minimum wage, seems to be concerned about its economic policy towards the Territories. He said, in fact, in the law extending tax credits to American Samoa to the end of this year, Congress ordered in a staff report that it establish a long-term comprehensive economic policy for American Samoa.

“Indeed, in that language, the reference was also to the Territories suggesting possible congressional interest in reexamining its policies for the Territories in general,” said Governor Togiola. “I call upon you, Mr. Secretary and your delegation to ensure a consistent U.S. policy that will assist and support local action in diversifying our economy.”

Governor Togiola said his concerns about unemployment, personal income disparities, high inflation, and the serious threat to the viability of our cannery industry, translate directly into a lower tax base for American Samoa for both government operating needs and especially long term infrastructure needs.

At the meeting, Governor Togiola also reported that a letter of intent was under review in regards to the submarine fiber optic cable project (Pacific Rim East cable) and will be finalized next week.

“This will build local infrastructure and attract foreign investors to the Territory as well as build and promote a local skilled labor force,” Governor Togiola.

In regards to the minimum wage, Governor Togiola encourages Congress and the Office of Insular Affairs to proceed immediately to implement Congressman Faleomavaega - Congressman Miller’s agreement on HR 1591. The agreement requires Department of Labor to report to Congress on the immediate and future impacts of the new minimum wage on American Samoa’s economy.

Governor Togiola said he supports H.R. 1075, which establishes a Territorial Bond Bank. The Bank is intended to provide low-cost financing for the Territories to construct infrastructure or refinance debt to create a bond bank to address critical long-term infrastructure needs in the Territories.

Secretary Kempthorne, whose department administers the financial assistance provided to American Samoa, was accompanied by BJ Penn, Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Installations and Environment, Donald Schregardus, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Environment and Papali’i David Cohen, Interior’s Deputy Assistant Secretary for Insular Affairs.

The Honorable Secretary was bestowed the high chiefly title of Pulelei’ite (ruler who foretells the future) at an ava ceremony held at Gagamoe, Pago Pago before touring the National Park of American Samoa in Vatia and the StarKist Samoa cannery plant in Atu’u.

Secretary Kempthorne and his delegation will depart the Territory Thursday, June 14th, at 11am after a press conference to be held at the airport fale.

Parks & Rec to keep youngster busy for summer with sports and fun

The Department of Parks and Recreation has a summer program to help local parents keep their kids busy this summer by offering activities that are both recreational and fun. The summer recreation program kicked off on June 4 and will end on August 4. Parents can sign up their children for any one of the programs that interests them at the Parks and Recreation Office in the Tafuna Industrial Park behind Hawthorne Machinery of Samoa. The schedules for each sport will be given out upon registration. More information can be obtained by calling Luce Ekeroma at 699-9513

Governor Togiola on the passing of Senator HC Faiivae Apelu Galea'i

(UTULEI) – Governor Togiola Tulafono offered the following statement on June 3rd upon learning of the passing of Senator High Chief Faiivae Apelu Galea'i:

“Today, American Samoa lost one of her most innovative, inspirational and influential leaders in the passing of Senator HC Faiivae Apelu Galea'i.

I feel a very personal sense of loss in his passing away. I call to mind his personal attention to my own development as an individual.

On behalf of the Territory and people of American Samoa, I offer to Mrs. Fiatagata Galea'i, her children and their immediate families our sincere sympathy and condolences.

Senator Faiivae has served our people with the greatest degree of love and care in his personal affection for our culture. He was a student of the Samoan language and culture and a devout supporter of the preservation of the “faa-Samoa.” To him we owe a great deal of gratitude and all that he has done to ensure that our language and culture will transcend generations.

In the past, I observed his work as Director of Tourism and the many island projects that have been realized through his subtle influence. I have had the great opportunity to serve together with him as a senator. I truly admired his courage and commitment to advocate on unpopular issues that would later turn out to be acceptable by general consensus and in the best interest of American Samoa. His political savvy is one of a kind.

I also admire with great appreciation his accomplishments in business and personal developments. One of those great highlights in his life was receiving his degree in theology.

With such knowledge and training, he has espoused the importance of God in our lives - in government and in private life.

He will be greatly missed. And for a long time, if ever, he will not be forgotten.”

Department of Health bids farewell to husband & wife surgery team



The Department of Health hosted a farewell luncheon to say Tofa Soifua and Fa'afetai Tele to visiting plastic surgeon Dr. Victor Hay-Roe and his wife Lynn, who has been his surgical assistant for 33 years.

The husband and wife team is from the Honolulu Medical Group and they were here for a week to perform much needed surgery on local youngsters who were born with open cleft palates on the roof of their mouths.

While here, the couple treated over 20 young people, between the ages of 3 and 18 years old.

An open cleft palate is a birth deformity that can cause hardship with speech and suction for babies.

Those that were treated are with the Children With Special Needs Program under the Department of Health.

Dr. Victor Hay-Roe has been a surgeon for 40 years and he was here before, in 2003, to offer the same services. In the 1970s, he visited the independent state of Samoa, where he performed similar surgical procedures.

Two of the patients Dr. Hay-Roe saw four years ago came back again for follow ups, and he said “they are doing just fine.”

“On behalf of this office and the people of American Samoa, we would like to thank Dr. Hay-Roe and his wife for being here to offer their much-needed services,” said DOH medical director Dr. Ivan Tuliau.

Open cleft palates that are left untreated result in complications with enunciating certain letters and sounds, causing those who have it to be labeled as mentally retarded – something that is serious enough to make life very difficult for them.

It was the Part C Program staff who were instrumental in getting the young patients in to receive treatment.

The couple was here in response to an invitation from the Department of Health and Hay-Roe said that if he and his wife are invited again, they will be here as early as next year to offer their services.

Governor Togiola congratulates Samoa on election of new Head of State

(UTULEI) - Governor Togiola Tulafono received the official announcement from Samoa Prime Minister – Tuilaepa Sailele Malielegaoi of the successful conclusion of the election of His Highness Tuiatua Tupua Tamasese Efi as Head of State of Independent Samoa.

Governor Togiola was invited by Prime Minister Tuilaepa to the swearing-in ceremonies at Parliament House on Tuesday, June 19th at 3 o'clock in Apia.

The following is the official statement from Governor Togiola:

“Mary and I shall offer our personal "fa'amalo" and congratulations, and the fa'amalo and congratulations from the citizens and residents of American Samoa, to His Highness, the Head of State of Independent Samoa, Le Afioga i le Ao Mamalu - Tuiatua Tupua Tamasese Efi, when we attend the swearing in ceremonies at Mulinu'u. All the citizens and residents of American Samoa share the joy and jubilation of the people of Independent Samoa upon a successful exercise of the democratic process, deeply rooted in our Christian values and faith, believing that the divine help of our God saw to the peaceful election and transition of leadership for Samoa. For that we shall all give thanks to our God for His loving care and guidance in this difficult process.

I also congratulate Prime Minister Tuila'epa Lupesoli'ai Aiono Malielegaoi Sailele for his superior leadership in the process, in arriving at a successful and peaceful election of the Head of State for Independent Samoa. I continue to wish him and his administration success and peace always. I offer, on behalf of the people of American Samoa, our support and Fa'a-Malo.

Ua se togi lau seu ua lagatila, lele ua fa'apulou i le tualima, ua malo fai o le faiva. Tau ina ia fa'amanuia tele le Atua i le fotu faiva o le Afioga i le Ao Mamalu, fa'apea faiva i lau afioga i le Palemia ma le faigamalo a Samoa Tuma'oti. Ave fo'i le fa'amalo i talosaga a le au failotu, ae maise o le tapua'iga mamalu i a Pule ma Tumua. Ua a'e malo ou faiva, faafetai i le Atua.

Soifua. Governor Togiola T.A. Tulafono. For and on Behalf of the Territory and People of American Samoa."

Governor Togiola at “start of new era in Samoa” ceremony in Apia



Samoa's new Head of State, His Highness Tuiatua, being sworn in at Parliament House, in Tiafau, by Chief Justice Patu Tiavaasue. Photo: Savali News

(APIA) - Governor Togiola Tulafono and First Lady Mary Ann Tulafono today attended the swearing in ceremony of Samoa's new Head of State – His Highness Tuiatua Tupua Tamasese Efi at Parliament House in Tiafau.

In an hour-long ceremony, His Highness Tuiatua took the oath of office from Samoa Chief Justice Patu Tiavaasue Falefatu Sapolu with Governor Togiola, Prime Minister Tuilaepa Sailele Malielegaoi, members of Parliament and the foreign diplomatic corps in attendance.

“It is indeed an honor to have witnessed the start of a new era for Samoa and the Pacific,” said Governor Togiola. “I have conveyed to His Highness Tuiatua the congratulations and the warm good wishes of the people and government of American Samoa on his unanimous election

by Parliament as Head of State of Samoa.”

“This is a celebration of the highest accolade for His Highness and we, as a people who share a proud heritage and traditions, rich culture and history, join in thanksgiving in offering our prayers and blessings for a successful tenure.””

While addressing the nation from Parliament House, His Highness Tuiatua offered special acknowledgement of the presence of Governor Togiola and First Lady Mary Ann and the strong cultural bond between the two Samoas.

Major Road Reconstruction Phase II Project

The major road reconstruction Phase II project (which extends from the Fire Station to the Pago Plaza), will be advertised for a re-bid because of insufficient funds, but an exact date is yet to be confirmed.

This is according to Civil Highway Division manager Faleosina Voight who said that because of this, it is necessary for them to make changes to the scope of work.

Department of Public Works director Taeaotui Punafofo Tilei said that one of the concerns is whether or not to use concrete or asphalt for the project. *(continued on page 6)*

DBAS revolving loan fund for entrepreneurs and existing businesses

The Development Bank of American Samoa, in collaboration with the Department of Commerce, is currently offering the Economic Development Administration Revolving Loan Fund (EDARLF), which is a federal loan program intended to expand and diversify the local economy.

“The EDARLF provides financing opportunities for entrepreneurs and existing businesses to overcome limited access to investment capital, and ensures that the benefits of these growth industries accrue to the local economy.”

The EDA’s stated goal and mission is to lead the federal economic development agenda by promoting innovation and competitiveness, preparing American regions for growth and success in the worldwide economy.

Projects considered eligible under the loan program must be categorized in one of the growth industries targeted in the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) and may include small business development (as applicable by SBA definition), health care services, e-commerce, food processing, manufacturing, air transportation/trans-shipment, information technology services, fisheries/fish processing, tourism, eco-tourism, resort and recreational business activities, import – substitution, and the establishment, expansion, or retention of businesses engaged in commercial, industrial, or agricultural services.

It is these types of businesses that are given priority during the selection process.

Loan amounts range from a minimum of \$1,000 to a maximum of \$100,000 with an interest rate of 9% for a term from 1 to 7 years (maximum).

Eligible activities/costs under the program include machinery and equipment costs, working and start-up capital, inventory, structure renovations for non-residential purposes, and infrastructure costs associated with an *existing* structure.

To be eligible for the selection criteria, the borrower must have a project for which goods and services are primarily exported from American Samoa. The program also targets businesses that will provide badly needed services in the local community, as well as new and existing business ventures that are owned and operated by local residents, which create new jobs. Priority will be given to projects that create skillful and good paying jobs.

Preference will be given to businesses that create permanent jobs involving quality skills and trades, and loans under the program will be available to profit-oriented small businesses for the purpose of start-up, expansion, or maintenance of existing operations.

A borrower is eligible for EDRLF financing only “when credit is not otherwise available on terms and conditions which would permit completion and/or successful operation, or accomplishment of the project activities to be financed.”

There are also non-eligible projects and activities that cannot be funded under the program. These include retail store and laundromat services, commercial transportation (bus, taxi, etc.), refinancing of existing debt, subsidizing interest payments, acquiring equity in private businesses, purchasing of land or building, construction of a building, and projects involving the relocation of any business away from or to the territory.

DBAS representatives and government employees working for the DOC directly or indirectly in RLF management and decision-making are not eligible for the loan program. In addition, loans, which would create a potential conflict of interest for any DBAS officer or employee, as well as loan activities that directly benefit these individuals or those related to them by marriage of law, are non-eligible.

Those looking to invest in high interest accounts, certificates of deposits, or other investments, along with people who intend to use the loan program to provide equity required of borrowers under other federal programs need not apply.

There are required documents that need to be submitted to DBAS, which include a business plan, financial statements, tax returns, financial projections, a business license, a decline letter from either ANZ Amerika Samoa Bank or Bank of Hawaii, a description of the collateral used as loan security, and a certificate of completion from the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) for a “New Business Start Up” course.

There is a \$75 application processing fee.

More information on the EDRLF loan program can be obtained by calling Shirley Fruean or Komesina Afalava at 633-4031 ext. 236 or 239 from Monday – Friday between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m.

Log on today at www.dbas.org or email dbasinfo@dbas.org with any questions, comments, or concerns.

Major Road Reconstruction Phase II Project

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Currently, the only contractor that provides asphalt services is McConnell Dowell, which has been sole-sourced to carry out several jobs because of this reason. Taeaotui said that in his opinion, concrete is a better choice but the downfall would be major traffic jams, as concrete takes longer to dry than asphalt.

“If we use concrete, it would take a while for it to set, meaning that diverting traffic will be very hard and motorists will become very impatient,” Taeaotui explained. Road projects that use asphalt usually require a lesser drying period, meaning that the repaired areas can be utilized as early as the next day. Taeaotui said that when the Phase II project was first put out for bid, only one contractor submitted a bid but it was about \$3 million over Public Works’s estimate of the job.

Gov. Togiola addresses scholarship restructuring and professional training

(UTULEI) – Governor Togiola Tulafono in an official address today aired on KVZK-TV said the American Samoa Government will restructure its scholarship program because, in his words, “the results have been very disappointing with only a few past recipients graduating and return home to stay.”

Governor Togiola Tulafono, in his 20 minute address, also said “often, jobs are unavailable for the graduates. Many graduate from college but possess no skills.”

“With limited resources, we need to maximize the results of our investment. We must coordinate scholarships and our needs, cut losses, and establish conditions to insure return,” said Gov. Togiola. “We need to make certain our graduates return with skills that meet the manpower needs of our government and the community, and that there will be jobs for them here.”

The following is the entire address presented by Governor Togiola Tulafono June 8, 2007 on KVZK-TV:

“In my recent Flag Day speech, I promised more information on programs to prepare our youth for the future. I want to discuss in some detail the ASG Scholarship Program where scholarships are offered every year for high school and community college graduates and in relation to the manpower needs of our government

Our constitution on “encourage[s] qualified persons of good character to acquire education, local and abroad, both general and technical, and thereafter to return to American Samoa to the end that the people thereof may benefit (Title 1, Sec. 15).”

The ASG scholarship program (Title 25, ACSA) is developed from that constitutional wish. The law established a Scholarship Board to which it gave the responsibility to decide use of funds and select recipients. DOE administers the program. It is a difficult ongoing task for which Board members are not compensated. I commend the chairman, Rev. Ned Ripley, and members of the Board, for their dedicated service.

The constitutional wish is two-pronged. First, provide opportunities for graduates with potential to attend college off island. Two, that they return to serve the people. The ultimate goal is to have a government workforce of high caliber.

After monitoring it closely in recent years, I am convinced that to meet the constitutionally expressed goal, we must restructure the program in order to upgrade skills and qualifications of our public servants. Businesses, churches, and other organization also need workers with skills.

At present, there are three parts of the Scholarship Program:

1. The regular Scholarship and Student Loans. Annual appropriation: \$2 million.

(a) Scholarships have been granted for over 20 years. Each year, about 25 high school graduates are awarded 4-year \$7,000 scholarships to attend off island colleges. Awards are based on achieving a certain grade point average, and a score of 1,500 in the Student Aptitude Test (SAT). Top graduates of ASCC are also awarded two-year scholarships to continue studies off island. At present, there are 175 students on the scholarship program.

(b) The loan program was established in 1997 to accommodate students with good grades, but fall short of the scholarship requirements. Loans are \$7,000 per year. Borrowers are screened and approved by the Scholarship Board. At present, 150 student borrowers are studying for bachelor degrees; and 25 for graduate and professional degrees. Total: 175.

In the past, the board awarded scholarships for graduate and professional studies. That part of the program was later cut because of failure to return.

Consequently, those who sought financial assistance to do graduate studies and professional training were directed to the student loan side of the program. The Board has a waiver program of up to 50% for students who return to work in American Samoa. I am pleased to announce once again the recent completion of doctor degree studies at the University of Hawaii by three local students – Ann Stanislaus, Tuamasaga Unutoa, and Miss Langkilde-Coleman. They were graduates of local high schools and attended college under our program.

But there is also a sad note. Most scholarship students do not return to stay. Some return and leave again, claiming inability to find jobs. Others refuse to accept jobs offered. Out of the 25 students sent each year, only four or five return. The goal of the program is almost totally defeated.

Many students drop out. The reasons vary. I find it hard to believe that college work is too hard for them, for they were the cream of the crop each year. If some have succeeded, why not all?

2. DOE Teacher Scholarships. Appropriation - \$300,000. This part of the scholarship program is handled directly by DOE. It has funded teacher upgrade and higher degree studies. It is doing well.

3. Stateside certification program. Appropriation - \$1.5 million.

The drive for local teachers to receive stateside certification began in 2005. The preference is certification in content areas. The theory is, if local teachers are stateside certified, our schools should be as good as those in the states. *(continued on page 7)*

Scholarship restructuring and professional training

(continued from page 6)

The program is beginning to bear fruits. A number have returned with degrees in the critical areas of English and Math, and have been assigned to local schools. Two are returning with certification. Others are at various stages of completing the certification process. The funding is one time.

Scholarships to enter teacher-training colleges are offered, under this program, to students graduating with bachelors.

A teacher-training program was begun at ASCC last year by awarding 24 scholarships to prospective teachers to take their first two years at ASCC, before moving up to off island teacher training colleges. Unfortunately, only half remained in the program before the end of their first year. However, the Task Force is determined to push ahead with the program by awarding another 24 scholarships to prospective teachers in this year's crop of high school graduates.

Because it was considered a very vital need last year, short term institutes were conducted for teachers in the Samoan culture and language. Over three hundred local teachers attended the six- week institutes. Two or three more are planned before the coming school year. Two teachers are seeking graduate degrees in this field at the National University of Samoa.

Why are we restructuring the Scholarship program? Because the results, especially of the regular annual scholarship program, have been very disappointing only a few graduate and return to stay. Often, jobs are unavailable for them. Many graduate from college but possess no skills.

With limited resources, we need to maximize the results of our investment. We must coordinate scholarships and our needs, cut losses, and establish conditions to insure return. We need to make certain our graduates return with skills that meet the manpower needs of our government and the community, and that there will be jobs for them here.

The Scholarship Board, in coordination with the Department of Manpower Resources and DOE, has worked out a new three-part program. It will begin this year.

1. Undergraduate scholarships:

(a) Ten (10) four-year scholarships of \$7,000 a year will be available for high school graduates with top grades and SAT scores of not less than 1500.

(b) Ten (10) two-year scholarships of \$7,000 a year will be available for ASCC students with the best grade records, to continue their degree studies off-island.

(c) Forty (40) two-year scholarships of \$1000 each year will be awarded to high school graduates with high grades and SAT scores, to attend ASCC.

(d) Funding will continue for scholarships and loans, second to fourth year, provided they meet Board requirements.

(e) Every student, be they on a scholarship grant or a loan, will be required to sign an agreement to return. The waiver of up to 50% for student loans recently approved by the Board, will be in force.

2. Graduate degrees and professional training:

The need for professionals like doctors, engineers, and lawyers continue to increase. Recruiting is expensive. It is not easy to find and keep good people. It is time we face facts and take bold steps to make the necessary changes. We need professionals to offer the services that meet requirements of present lifestyles, and lead our people to join the march of modern civilization. That is done through investment we have a moral obligation to maximize the results of investments, for they are made from very limited resources.

Therefore, we are returning to the policy of developing our local core of professionals and skilled public servants. We begin by offering scholarships in the areas of greatest need, and gradually work our way to cover all areas of government services, hopefully within the next five years. Where the need is greatest, opportunities will be offered every year. Beginning this year (2007-2008), and in consultation with the Director of Human Resources, graduate and professional scholarships will be offered as follows:

Two(2) scholarships for studies in each of these fields - medicine (including dentists), law, civil engineering and physical education / coaching. One (1) scholarship for studies in each of these fields - health/hospital technician, computer engineering, journalism and media, law enforcement / criminal justice, agriculture, and historian/ archivist/ curator.

These opportunities will be offered first to those presently studying in these fields.

For 2008-2009, scholarships will offered as follows. Two(2) scholarships for studies in each of these fields - medicine and physical education / coaching. One (1) scholarship for studies in each of these fields - law, civil engineering, personnel manager, economic planning, counseling, environmental scientist, health/hospital technician, travel and tourism.

The slots for years 2009-2010 and beyond will be structured by the Board, in consultation with the Director of Human Resources and various agencies, and announced a year ahead so that students graduating from the bachelor degree program can plan accordingly. Employees in these fields may apply for these scholarships.

3. Cohort programs

To meet the critical need for trained and certified counselors, the Board, working with DOE and Human Resources, is entering the area of cohorts. (continued on page 8)

Scholarship restructuring and professional training

(continued from page 7)

Cohort programs are organized and held here, to provide graduate studies and professional training for government employees, while they continue in their jobs. The most recent example was the graduation of 16 local teachers with Masters degrees earned in the Cohort program with the University of Hawaii.

Counseling has been recognized as one the areas in serious need of trained professionals. Work is now in progress to arrange a counseling cohort with the University of San Diego. We hope to start in June. Twenty-five candidates will be selected from present staff of DOE, Human and Social

Services, LBJ Hospital, and Public Safety. They must possess bachelor degrees and have their applications accepted by the University.

Each candidate selected will be awarded a \$7,000 scholarship, which will go toward cost of the program. The cohort is a two-year program after which the candidates, if successful, will receive an MA and certified as a trained counselor.

A cohort on accounting will follow. I believe government accountants should have graduate training, and hopefully go on to become certified public accountants. Another area where a cohort is vitally needed is law enforcement

Other Comments:

I have not said anything about nursing because we have a separate special program for them, and that is working well. A number of local nurses recently passed the national Registered Nurse test and are now working at LBJ Hospital in Faga'alu.

As you know, we only have two Samoan MDs in our medical care service. I have asked the Board to look into preparing our Suva Medical School graduates in medicine and dentistry, to take the U. S. Medical License Exam (USMLE).

The Board is also inviting departments and agencies to make known their wishes for special training, so they may be fitted into their schedules.

I wish to announce the addition of a Scholarship Search unit to our Scholarship program. There are many scholarships and financial assistance available at universities and colleges, foundations, corporations, government agencies, and a variety of other sources. We need to contact them and request inclusion.

I have said a lot tonight. Rome was not built in a day. The investment we are making now may not bear fruit for a while. It takes six to seven years to school and train doctors after they have earned the bachelors degrees. Even if we do not get to harvest them, we must still plant the seeds now so that our future generations may enjoy high quality government and business services.

Thank you for your attention and your interest in this vital program planned to improve the abilities of our young people to handle the future of American Samoa. Soifua."

DPW Road Projects Moving Along

The Territory will be seeing a lot more road improvements and seawalls, as several local contractors have already been awarded contracts to carry out the job.

A new seawall and road in Aoa village, upgrading the Taputimu loop, and carrying out rockfall mitigation projects for six different sites across American Samoa are currently top priorities for the Department of Public Works (DPW).

All sealed bids from different local contractors were submitted to the Source Evaluation Board (SEB) who made the final decision on which company is best for the job.

AOA - Of the five companies that placed bids, Samoa Maritime was awarded the contract for the road and seawall projects in Aoa, both of which are funded by the Federal Highway Administration.

TAPUTIMU - Six contracting companies vied for the Taputimu loop project, funded by the Department of Interior through Capital Improvement Project (CIP) funds, and RM Construction came out on top. (The Taputimu loop is the area that leads towards Le'ala and Vailoatai). DPW director Taeatui Punafo Tilei said groundbreaking for this particular project took place on June 8th.

POLOA, FAGASA & PAGO PAGO - Two Emergency Recovery Projects have been awarded to Duke Purcell and Island Builders. They are the Poloa road repair project and the project for the Fagasa guardrail, which is located on the steep pass between Fagasa and Pago Pago. Both areas were damaged during the recent hurricane and work is underway for repair.

LELOALOA & ATU'U - Another Emergency Relief Project is the one involving the Leloaloa/Atu'u streams and road drainage, and a pre-construction conference took place to discuss the matter.

Taeatui indicated that the project, which is funded by the Federal Highway Administration, will be sole-sourced to McConnell Dowell because it involves asphalt, and it is the only local contractor who can provide the service at this time.

AVAU - This is the same reason why McConnell Dowell has been sole-sourced to resurface the road from Avau to the airport intersection. The project will involve some drainage improvement work but it will mainly be an overlay job, similar to the completed work between Manumalo Baptist School in Malaeimi and ASCC.

ROCKFALL MITIGATION PROJECTS - In other news, two contractors have already submitted their bids for the rockfall mitigation projects, which will be funded locally.

The rockfall mitigation projects include four sites in the east (Alega, Alofau, Lauli'i, and Aumi), and two sites in the west (Atauloma and Asili).

DPW's Civil Highway Division manager Faleosina Voight explained that the targeted sites are areas where landslides and incidents of falling rocks have been reported within the last five years.

"Numerous villages and areas were identified but nonetheless, the decision was made to prioritize the six named sites because they have become very problematic," Voight said.